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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, July 24, 1935

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "MORE LAUNDRY WRINKLES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

As we were saying not long ago, ironing day in many homes -- not yours nor mine, of course; present company always excepted -- but in many homes, ironing day is much harder than it needs to be. Yet I've never heard that St. Peter would open the pearly gates any faster for the poor soul who brought herself to an early grave doing unnecessary ironing. I've never heard either that you could get credit in heaven for doing your ironing in the hardest way. And I know -- from experience -- that the one who takes advantage of all the little ways to ease this job, gets her reward on earth.

You know, wrinkles are the root of the ironing problem. The fewer the wrinkles in your clothes, the easier the ironing -- and the fewer the wrinkles in your brow at the end of the day. Old timers at family laundering tell me that they're as careful about avoiding wrinkles in wringing, hanging, folding and even rolling up clothes as they are about the ironing itself. They study wrinkle prevention all along the line, so to speak.

For example, take the wringing process. They advise shaking each piece straight and smooth just as it comes out of the rinsing water and putting it smoothly through the rolls of the wringer. In fact, one friend tells me that she saves much work in ironing by folding each towel lengthwise before running it through the wringer and then hanging it to dry, still smoothly folded.

Then the hanging has much to do with wrinkles. Getting the hang of it -- of each item of laundry -- means less work at the ironing board.

Dog-eared sheets and towels and pillow cases -- they're the marks of an amateur who is making a lot of unnecessary ironing for herself. Sheets that have hung from the corners are hard to iron smooth and straight and they wear out quickly at the corners. So do those that hang from a center fold. The trick is to fold your sheet, right side out, hem to hem, and place it on the line so the hemmed edges hang over 8 to 12 inches. The result of that hanging is a shapely, squared-off sheet, easy to smooth and fold, and with one step saved in the final folding process. The same good method of hanging applies to pillow slips and towels. Fold over one end about six inches. Never hang from the corners.

Shirts? Well, as the old saying goes, a man's shirt, like the monkey and the 'possum, should hang by the tail. If you hang it by the yoke, the marks of the clothes pin are hard to get out

Dresses? Sturdy house dresses also hang upside down. But more fragile frocks do better if you hang them on a wooden clothes hanger pinned to the line.

If you can hang clothes outdoors, the breezes will help you reduce wrinkles. When you put the dry laundry in the basket, fold it smoothly. And finally, when you sprinkle and roll up, be sure each piece lies smooth and isn't rolled too tight.

So much for wrinkle reduction. Now a word about unnecessary work on a summer ironing day. Personally, I'm in favor of not ironing a thing that you don't absolutely have to iron, especially in hot weather when the week's wash is always large. Many pieces don't need pressing at all if you wring them flat and hang them straight. Wash cloths, Turkish towels, and dish towels are good examples. Hang them straight and fold them smooth and they'll do very nicely with no ironing. Many women who do their own washing -- very good housekeepers, too, I might say -- prefer to dry their sheets outdoors in the sun and then fold them carefully and leave them unironed. If your housewifely conscience won't let you rest easily on unironed sheets, compromise by just pressing the top hem. If you fold the sheet before you press, you'll smooth most of the rest of it pretty well as you iron the top.

And speaking of Turkish towels, in many homes nowadays the linen closet boasts small Turkish towels for face and hand use. They're softer and more absorbent than ordinary hand towels, and they don't require ironing.

For informal summer meals, many people now use tablecloths and doilies and napkins that need no ironing. Cotton crepe has long been a favorite for this reason. It's an inexpensive material, you know, and when hung to dry all straight and smooth, it needs no pressing. Seersucker is another fabric that now appears on the summer dining table and is more popular than ever for bedspreads and curtains, for play clothes for children and sports clothes for grownups. If seersucker dries smooth, you don't need to iron it -- or at least you only need to press it over after it dries. Of course, you can use the ever-popular paper napkins to save ironing, too.

Other items that never need feel the touch of an iron are net window curtains and most knitted fabrics. Our grandmothers used great frames for drying net curtains smooth. You can get about as good results if you hang your curtains up while damp and run an extra rod through the lower hem to act as a weight and hold the curtain smooth and straight. As for knitted fabrics -- well, no one is misguided enough to iron stockings any more. We all know they'll fit better and last longer without it. The same is usually true of knit underwear -- cotton or silk, and also sweaters and knit dresses. Dry them flat and gently pull them to the proper size and shape as they dry.

Oh, washlady, spare that iron. Touch not a single towel -- or sheet, or tablecloth, or curtain, or dress, that can get along without it. And, washlady, watch those wrinkles. Remember that the way to prevent them is to wring clothes flat, hang them square, dampen and roll them smooth. Yours for easier ironing days.

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